

BUDGET 2026 MEDIA STATEMENT

SVP welcome targeted measures but say more is needed to reduce burden on struggling families.

7th October 2025 The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) welcomes targeted measures for families in today's Budget 2026 announcement but say much more is needed to reduce the burden on families already in poverty or those at risk of poverty.

“Any increase which gives people more to pay for essentials is welcomed, particularly as costs continue to rise, however when we look at how it affects people the numbers show us that people today cannot afford to buy the same items they were able to buy in 2020. While some targeted measures will have a positive impact, the amounts have fallen short of what people need to buy essentials and for the government to tackle consistent poverty” says the Society.

SVP says that according to the March 2025 CSO SILC data consistent poverty in the general population has risen from 3.6% to 5% since March 2024. Among children the increase is worse going from 4.8% in March 2024 to 8.5% this year. and for one parent families the situation is even worse again with consistent poverty now at 11%

Children Living in Poverty

SVP particularly welcome the increase to the Child Support Payment by €8 per week for children under 12 and €16 per week for those aged 12 and over, to reflect age-related costs and reach children in the lowest-income families, which it called for as part of its Pre-Budget Submission. SVP say that these child support measures must be balanced against an inadequate change to the adult rate. A key requirement in reducing child poverty is to base any action on overall family supports says SVP.

“The increase to the Child Support Payment is very welcome and will go further towards meeting the cost of essentials for children. However, when we look at it in the context of the whole picture for a family, the €10 adjustment to the adult rate means that the overall change to a family household income falls short of what was recommended and will continue to leave a significant gap between income supports and people's needs.”

Income Inadequacy

Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) research demonstrates the level of income required for a socially acceptable standard of living. Current core social protection rates do not meet MESL benchmarks for many low-income household types, including single-adult headed households and families with children. The targeted measures to support these groups including an increase in the Living Alone Allowance, improvements to the Income Disregard for One-Parent Family Payment and Jobseekers Transitional Payment, were not implemented in Budget 2026.

The increase of €0.65 in the Minimum Wage is a movement in the right direction but the new level of €14.15 is still €1.25 below the MESL Living Wage Rate for 2025/2026 of €15.40.

Energy Supports

In terms of energy costs SVP is pleased at the extension of the Fuel Allowance to those in receipt of the Working Family Payment and the increase in the threshold for WFP. Seeking help with energy costs is among the highest reasons people give when seeking help from SVP.

SVP sought an increase in the fuel allowance by €9.50 per week and the extension of the allowance to families in receipt Working Family Payment. "We know that the most recent arrears figures show almost 300,000 households in arrears with electricity and 170,000 with gas, and that is before Winter kicks in. Higher energy costs have been masked by energy credits, but this year without them even households in receipt of the Fuel Allowance will struggle. The €5 increase announced today falls short of addressing the decline in purchasing power which has been allowed to develop since 2020, and is €400 less in terms of energy supports given to households last winter."

Housing and Homelessness

With homelessness consistently increasing SVP says there is nothing in the 2026 Budget to help those in emergency accommodation; *"We had hoped that at least the budget would introduce access to a child support worker for all children in emergency accommodation but that has not happened. There are thousands more individuals, families and children affected by hidden homelessness and not counted in official homeless figures. Social housing gives people the foundation to build a good life and is a key measure in addressing the housing and homeless crisis. The delivery of 10,200 new build social homes is likely to be insufficient given the scale of the crisis."*

Disability and Carers

SVP says that it is very disappointed that the needs of carers and those with disabilities have not been considered in this budget. A significant amount of the households the charity supports are either headed by someone with a disability or have a disabled family member.

"Too often we meet households with a disabled family member who cannot afford food or heating, who prioritise their children's wellbeing at the expense of their own health or are forced into financial hardship because of costs associated with their disability, such as dietary needs, regular transport to appointment or higher energy or technology requirements at home"

"There is also a huge gap in state provision for children with additional needs. Our Conferences have increasingly been asked to help fund private assessments and

vital therapy supports. We are disappointed that sufficient investment was not announced to clear the waiting list backlog for the assessment of need process. We had also called for investment in therapy supports for children so that their needs could be met in school and in the community without being placed on long waiting lists for years.”

Education including Early Years

SVP says “Investing in education from early years right through to adult and lifelong education is one of the best investments Government can make. Quality, publicly funded early years and education is key to ensuring that children get a good start in life and break the cycle of poverty. We are disappointed not to see an announcement to establish local, publicly run Early Childhood, Education and Care services.”

The charity welcomes increased investment for the National Childcare Scheme, however, many of the families it supports cannot access those benefits as their provider is not signed up the scheme.

In terms of education, the progress made in recent budgets has not been built upon to further support parents who are cutting back on essentials or going into debt to meet school costs. The charity’s key recommendation to improve educational equity, included the removal of mock exam and correction fees, provision of funding support for electronic devices in schools and an increase of the capitation grant by 25%, with a higher rate of 30% made available to schools that implement the Department of Education’s guidance on affordable school uniforms.

“Essentially, the measures in Budget 2026 have taken a more targeted approach than previous budgets, which we welcome, however, it has failed to tackle the underlying insecurity for people living in poverty and adequately address the challenges of rising living costs” says the Society.

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